COMMENTS ON "THE ADVOCATES" PROGRAM RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF UPPER LIMITS ON TAR AND NICOTINE BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

The following comments relate to sticky questions on which the witness appeared to flounder. Possibly more direct answers, such as those suggested below, would have been more effective in convincing the public of the tobacco industry position:

Q. (To Dr. Sheldon Sommers)
Why do the insurance companies give lower rates to non-smokers?

A. Because, if you believe the statistics, from their point of view it is actuarially a smart thing to do. They don't have to know anything, or take a position about the smoking and health controversy to make that decision. They are just using statistics.

Q. Well, they do use actuarial statistics all the time so they, being hard-headed businessmen, must believe them to be reliable, don't you think?

A. They probably do believe them to be reliable, but that belief doesn't prove smoking causes lung cancer - the question we are concerned about here.

Q. (To President of The Tobacco Institute)
Can you name any medical organization or group that has not condemned the use of cigarets?

A. No, because the Interagency on Smoking and Health has circulated to all those organizations you listed a resolution opposing smoking, and most of them have endorsed it like we endorse motherhood, and oppose sin. I doubt if more than a handful of the people involved had examined any evidence on the question.

Q. (To President of The Tobacco Institute)
Would you advise teen-agers to smoke?

A. I recognize this as a trick question, like the one about still beating your wife. In the first place, my business is not that of giving advice to teen-agers. Personally, I would not advise them to smoke, to drink coffee or alcoholic beverages, or to drive at excessive speeds. I would counsel moderation and good judgement in all things. I would advise them to recognize the habits they are forming, and to expect them to make responsible and mature decisions rather than to try to make those decisions for them.

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Source: https://www.industrydocuments.ucsf.edu/docs/rgdj0000